

Greenbrier residents question City Council candidates  
written by Newspark Team | October 12, 2007

The three Democrats and two independents vying for election to the

Charlottesville City Council

answered questions from the Greenbrier Neighborhood Association on October 10, 2007. Topics included the impact of the Meadowcreek Parkway on neighborhood streets, the future of the proposed YMCA in McIntire Park, and the best way to mitigate cut-through traffic.



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## OPENING STATEMENTS



Satyendra Huja (D)

: "I bring a fair amount of experience, creativity and a proven record of service to this community and I feel that I am a public servant, and I like public service, and I think I can provide some help."

David Brown (D)

: "There are a couple of things I'd like to be part of in the next four years...The first thing is the sustainability initiatives which commits the city to trying to decrease the amount of energy that we use..."

Peter Kleeman (I)

: "My major areas of concern about the City's future relate to growth, environmental sustainability, transportation issues... So I become you as a candidate, that I believe that I have the background and

the experience of working on these issues... And I have the enthusiasm and I think the vision to try to bring the city in a new direction..."

Holly Edwards (D)

: "It was through meeting my patients that I started learning more about the community and the need to advocate for my patients on very different levels. As a result of that advocacy, I became more involved with community organizations... I believe that my strengths are my ability to provide leadership in areas of the community that have not been ignored, but their voices have not been heard as loudly as they could have been..."

Barbara Haskins (I)

: "I felt compelled to run last spring as I kept reading in the paper about the City budget cycle, and just became increasingly horrified... That came on the heels of years of double digit increases in home assessments and the City Manager and City Council deciding, let's just take it all."

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The first three questions were provided by the Greenbrier Neighborhood Association, followed by questions from the audience.

Question 1: The County is set to move forward with its portion of the Meadowcreek Parkway. VDOT is planning for groundbreaking in the fall or winter of 2008. Despite City Council's recent vote, our neighborhood is concerned that the County's portion, which runs between Rio Road and Melbourne Road, might be completed prior to the City's portion, which runs between Melbourne and McIntire. If the County portion were to open first, that would almost certainly drastically increase the traffic in the roads around Charlottesville High School. As a Councilor, what will you do to prevent and/or help our neighborhood deal with this potential traffic nightmare?

Satyendra Huja (D)

: "My understanding is the City and County have agreed to build it at the same time... If I were on Council, I'd make sure that's what would happen..."



David Brown (D)

: "My conversations with both VDOT people and with the County people are that along as things are moving ahead, it will be built at the same time. The problem would exist... if for some reason if the Parkway were significantly delayed or was not built..."

Peter Kleeman (I)

: "The Meadowcreek Parkway was originally a term that originally referred to the City and County portion together... Because of the desire for avoiding environmental and other protections in the park, the project has been fragmented... As a city councilor I would stand up for bringing these projects into one project, so that they could not be done at a separate time, and they would be considered against alternatives of meeting our transportation needs."

Holly Edwards (D)

: "I guess maintain pressure on the County so that everyone remains accountable for exactly what they said they would do when they said they would do it... I am so excited that we are moving forward with this because now maybe we can begin to have conversations about other things other than the Parkway..."



Barbara Haskins (I)

: "I would ask the County to not finish the last ten yards or something of that road, if there's a big gap... Assuming that Park Street and Rio are still available as the normal routes through that area...."

Question 2: One of the biggest problems citizens of our neighborhood, as well as others, experience on a daily basis is the increase of cut-through traffic on our neighborhood streets. In addition, speeding and disregarding traffic signs in general is a problem. If elected, what steps would you take to alleviate these separate but related problems?

Peter Kleeman (I)

: "There's a growth in cut-through traffic just because there's a growth in population and number of vehicles in the City, and people who know how to use cut-throughs are the people who live in the areas where the cut-throughs are... My feeling is one way to alleviate cut-through traffic is to do whatever we can...is to promote getting people out of their cars, or providing ways that people can do what they need to do... without driving."

Holly Edwards (D)

: "Maybe it's time to create a culture in Charlottesville where people know if they're speeding, if they're cutting through neighborhoods, and rushing to get to different places, that this is the City that you will get a ticket..."

Barbara Haskins (I)

: “People are going to continue to use cut-throughs unless the alternative is better. And so you can enhance the flow-through streets, you can make it more horrible to make it cut-through, but everyone of us makes these kinds of decisions. Buses are great but no one is going to get in that bus unless it somehow makes sense to them personally.

David Brown (D)

: “I think the solutions for this neighborhood in terms of transportation is the Meadowcreek Parkway, because that will allow people another choice on how to get to Rio Road besides coming through this neighborhood... To some degree, I think the Hillsdale Connector will help...”

Satyendra Huja (D)

: “There are two approaches to dealing with problems like this. One is to make it very difficult for people who are doing cut-through to cut-through... I would personally propose addition of a transit route through this neighborhood coming through Rio all the way to Downtown and the University. That could help.”

Question 3: While campaigning, each of you has learned a lot about where the others stand on the issues. Please tell us the differences you see between yourself and your fellow candidates, including your running mates, on issues that have come up other than those that have come up tonight.

Barbara Haskins (I)

: “Other candidates talk about leadership. I’m more of an advocate for the people who are paying to run Charlottesville, and hopefully we can restructure what Charlottesville is but we haven’t yet...”

Holly Edwards (D)

: “Mr. Huja talks about transportation and expanding it, and can say, “Well I know that the people I work with just really want to have a bus that’s going to take them straight from their house straight to work.” Then he can look at the bigger picture of “Maybe we need to look at what the routes are and really fine-tuning those.”



Peter Kleeman (I)

: “What I’m bringing to the table is a level of leadership that is not just about the vision for the future, but it’s also about the day to day activities today... My feeling is I have people supporting me who have been candidates from the Republican Party, I have people who are current sitting Councilors who are supporting me who are Democrats, and I have a broad range of people in between because I think I speak to the population in general and not to a particular view of the political spectrum.”

Satyendra Huja (D)

: "I think the definition of leadership in my mind is the ability to perceive the opportunity for problems before they become so, and then motivate other people to work on them... Just because we're Democrats doesn't mean we all agree. I think you can see that two of us support the Meadowcreek Parkway, and Holly is not so supportive."

David Brown (D)

: "Specific issues aren't necessarily what you're really looking for in a City Councilor. It's certainly part of the mix, but what you're looking for is a combination of background, and knowledge and experience that you can feel comfortable making decisions for the City..."

Audience question #1: "I want to mention the issue of bicycling in town. I bicycled to work for five years before I decided it was too dangerous. And I just want to make it clear that shared bicycling and vehicle traffic don't work. I want to hear your plans to do something about making this City much more... this City thinks its very up to speed with that kind of thing but its really actually behind the curve when it comes to dedicated bike lanes."



Holly Edwards (D)

: "As we begin to think about how we can have dedicated bike lanes or even as we're connecting the trails with the parks and how the bicycle lanes can be a part of that, part of the conversation, the ongoing conversation, needs to include how can we make people on bikes able to navigate the streets that are available in a way that's going to be safe?"

Peter Kleeman (I)

: "I'm a strong advocate for connecting the bicycle lanes that we have... Clearly, like any network, if it's fragmented, it doesn't really meet the needs of people... Cars really can't be the major part of transportation future..."

Barbara Haskins (I)

: "I think you can talk about different components of this problem. For example, on Locust Avenue right now there's parking on both sides of the street...Is one talking about putting bike lanes where there's currently parking, or is one talking about putting in bike lanes where there's currently two lanes and not much more? Those are the complicated parts of it because you already have a status quo, so there's a give and take...When there's a reconfiguration, that's the best time to add bike lanes."

David Brown (D)

: "I think there's a lot of streets that you can bicycle in Charlottesville that are safe with the bike lanes that exist now. I think there are some streets that are narrow, for example, University Avenue near the Corner... I think we should continue as best we can our bikes lanes..."

Satyendra Huja (D)

: "We are an old community, and so there are not that many opportunities for dedicated bike lanes, but there are possibilities. For example, in certain parts of urban community there are alleys which could be used for dedicated bike lanes... If you want to make it a viable mode of transportation, you need to put viable dollars in there..."

Audience question#2: I think what I'm hearing for the most part are incremental solutions to what are perceived as incremental problems, whereas, I see Charlottesville as going through an immense phase transition. I mean, as big as the transition from water to ice. We're just turning into a completely other sort of entity with huge commercial development pressures, population pressures, everybody going too fast... if my view of things has any credibility, what's the most drastic measure you can think of to address drastic change of any kind that you would care to introduce?

Satyendra Huja (D)

: "What people consider a drastic measure, after they are implemented, they become the norm. For example, the downtown pedestrian mall...the most radical thing I would think I would like to propose... is to really make transit the primary mode of transportation, and make it frequent, attractive, safe, even free, if possible..."

Barbara Haskins (I)

: "First of all, the drastic things are the changes in Albemarle County. This just endless amount of development... To me, the really big question is what I said before. I don't the City as it is currently defined geographically is a good idea... To me, it would incredibly drastic if we were able to revisit the revenue sharing agreement and annex parts of the County..."

Peter Kleeman (I)

: "We can manage growth. We don't have to have a whole group of nine-story boutique hotels to somehow supplement that which we want Charlottesville to be in the future.... I want to have a town that's a connected social interaction among people of all different types. We're a very transient kind of community with the University being here. Our demands are changing all the time... If we sat down and evaluated what would we like this to be, I think that's when these revolutionary ideas come in..."

Holly Edwards (D)

: "If I could create any drastic change, it would be to change the achievement gap..."

David Brown (D)

: "I think what the school system at some point needs is to really define the right type of charter school to boost achievement... "

Audience Question #3: "I believe the Police Department is not fully staffed... I would be interested to know how you feel about our police situation."

Audience Question #4: YMCA and McIntire Park. Briefly, what are your thoughts on this?

David Brown (D)

: "If there can be a clear commitment on the part of the YMCA to serve not the affluent but the middle and lower incomes, if we can do it on the softball fields and we're not taking up shelters, and if the programming works for the City...then I think it would be a beneficial partnership."

Satyendra Huja (D)

: "I've still not given up on the idea of saving our own pools also, but I know it's going to be difficult and expensive to do that."

Peter Kleeman (I)

: "I think having the centralized facility in McIntire Park really will detract from the benefits in the communities where the current pools are... We'll spend less money [on the YMCA] but we'll get less recreational benefit from it... We do have a AAA bond rating, we can borrow money at reasonable rates. Maybe the capital expenditure is not the key issue, it's what kind of benefits can we provide to our growing community?"

Holly Edwards (D)

: "My primary concern is and has always been that the children that need the facility the most won't have access to it, or if they have access to it, won't feel welcomed there..."

Barbara Haskins (I)

: "I have problems philosophically with us sharing the cost with the County when they have twice the population, and we're donating the land..."

Audience Question #5: What do you think about using City money to pay for Art in Place?

Audience Question #6: What do you think of the surveillance cameras?

## CLOSING STATEMENTS

Closing statement from Barbara Haskins (I)

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"It should be pretty obvious by now that I'm the spending watchdog and I think our structure as a political entity is very, very flawed and the farther down the road we go the more it's going to be untenable..."

Closing statement from Holly Edwards (D)

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"And I guess I would be the social justice watchdog, and I'd like to bring voice to a lot of issues and concerns that really impact the quality of life for all the citizens here..."

Closing statement from Peter Kleeman (I)

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"I think what I offer as a candidate is a conduit for getting us all to work a little bit closer together. The City working with the neighborhoods and individuals..."

Closing statement from David Brown (D)

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"I've worked hard, I try to listen, I try to bring a straight-forward, hopefully common sense approach to dealing with the issues that come up, and the issues that face us... I'll continue to do that for another four years if you'll allow me the privilege, though what I plan to do is entice one of my fellow Councilors should I be on Council again into being Mayor so I can sit over in the seat Blake Caravati used to sit in so I could like sit over there and cause trouble when I get bored like Blake used to do."

Closing statement from Satyendra Huja (D)

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"I think this is a great place to live, but I think it can be better... And I think if I had the opportunity, I



would try to make some of those improvements, and I will try to listen to you and work with you to find creative solutions...”

Timeline for podcast:

- 1:24 - Opening statement from Satyendra Huja (D)
- 3:31 - Opening statement from David Brown (D)
- 5:41 - Opening statement from Peter Kleeman (I)
- 7:54 - Opening statement from Holly Edwards (D)
- 10:02 - Opening statement from Barbara Haskins (I)
- 12:35 - Question 1
- 22:19 - Question 2
- 32:05 - Question 3
- 47:10 - Audience question #1
- 56:45 - Audience question #2
- 1:08:18 - Audience question #3
- 1:11:15 - Audience question #4
- 1:16:15 - Audience question #5
- 1:25:15 - Audience question #6
- 1:30:37 - Closing statement from Barbara Haskins (I)
- 1:30:54 - Closing statement from Holly Edwards (D)
- 1:31:21 - Closing statement from Peter Kleeman (I)
- 1:32:58 - Closing statement from David Brown (D)
- 1:33:54 - Closing statement from Satyendra Huja (D)

Sean Tubbs & Kendall Singleton